### Educating for Slavery or Freedom?

Recent proposals to clone human beings—creating duplicates from an original—are alarming because we find the prospect of factory-made copies of individuals an affront to nature and to what our sacred teachings tell us.

Those who, having tasted something of what these institutions have to offer, bravely decide to ‘walk out’ are called ‘dropouts’, or other bad names. Those who stick it out but are unable to make the grade are dubbed failures—some even kill themselves. The only ones declared successful are those who blindly and devotedly ‘by-heart’ the system. In turn, with great dedication and conviction, and at vast expense, they contribute to the churning out of more clones.

Gandhi warned of countries getting themselves cloned. He denounced, for instance, the move to turn Hindustan into Englishstan.

Those who, having tasted something of what these institutions have to offer, bravely decide to ‘walk out’ are called ‘dropouts’, or other bad names.

In grand sympathy with Gandhi on this issue were other remarkable individuals like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Ananda Coomaraswamy. Tagore parodied the imported, western schooling system so effectively in plays and short stories that those exposed to them rarely went to school again.

It is now an accepted fact that schools are ‘negative learning environments’. That colleges and universities in Asia, Africa and South America teach and certify knowledge of doubtful validity and utility. That they actively assist to disconnect people from nature. Their basic task appears to be nothing more than simply training people to fit smoothly as unthinking, obedient cogs within the global production machine.

For long we have desperately needed a dynamic coalition of individuals, institutions and organisations that will assist individuals and communities—proud of their not-English, not-European identities, languages, life-styles and culture—to resist efforts, however well-intentioned and well-meaning, to turn them into clones. Indeed, the globalisation project can only be successfully taken down by undermining its recruitment agenda currently ruling our educational institutions.

Welcome to the Multiworld Network. You now know what lies ahead.
The Multiworld Network: Beginnings

In most of our countries, it is considered normal (and even desirable) if children commencing from the time they are two and a half years old, up to the age of 21 are kept for long periods of time imprisoned within schools for the almost exclusively purpose of being drilled to memorise things that are supposed to assist them when they become adults.

Many of us who teach feel we are being forced to spend the best part of our lives teaching, learning, or being taught, mostly in schools where we are mechanically engaged in these tasks within institutions that were expressly set up decades ago to destroy our creativity and our identity; to make us doubt our innate abilities to interact with our environment, to question our inborn sense of worth and, finally, to discard reliance on indigenous intellectual traditions, knowledge systems or cosmologies. Modern education is based on the conviction that those who wish to function actively in society would not be able to function or perform better unless they are de-linked from their own traditions, their own histories and myths, and inborn abilities to think freely. Thus, what passes off as an 'educational system' today—and even to a greater degree in the coming years, in a future where we imagine the college and university setup—has become a cruel trap in which millions of young people unwittingly find themselves.

The present day educational system is not only an imposition (requiring mandatory attendance and compliance at every stage), but it also demands implicit allegiance to the homogenising values and objectives of globalisation. As such, it is a means of preparing the spirit of people to unquestioningly accept the presently entrenched deepens entrapment and bondage. It is a means of preparing the spirit of people to unquestioningly accept the presently entrenched deepens entrapment and bondage.

Today, with the pressure of globalisation and WTO regimes pushing down our backs, the education system is getting even more skewed in the direction of diverting the resources of societies to produce workers for global multinational companies. As the tentacles of the modern education system spread to even the remotest villages and tribal hamlets and compulsory education to children under 14 is offered as its tag, the present system of education, as it was known by previous generations, is a means of preparing the people for the future world, a future world that is not only a future of globalisation, but a future where the indigenous way of life is not only under threat, but a future where the indigenous way of life is not only under threat, but is being actively suppressed.

The Multiworld Network may have originated as a joint initiative of intellectuals and educators from India and Malaysia, but it is not only concerned with similar initiatives also underway in Africa and South America as well, where we are finding an equally strong resistance to the continuing disease of colonial education.

So when we needed a name for the Network Newsletter, we decided to seek a name and found our inspiration in Kamiriithu, in Kenya, a name that means 'outlook'. We found it under the public gaze, open to anyone who wanted to watch or offer his or her comments and criticisms. We were able to do something for their education. As Ngugi himself lived near the village, he agreed, and with others, set up the Kamiriithu Community Education Centre.

Ngugi saw theatre as a medium for learning. He disagreed with conventional imported notions that the theatre had to be 'taken to the people'. The theatre had long been part of African culture, playing an important role in village rituals and even everyday life. Ngugi sought to create a form of theatre that gelled with the living of the people participating in it, involving the community. The performance space, more than anything else, was the open air auditorium. This entailed more than producing performances open to the public. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, butstill, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English. All this was to change, however, when a woman from the village of Kamiriithu approached him demanding he do something for their education. As Ngugi himself lived near the village, he agreed, and with others, set up the Kamiriithu Community Education Centre. Ngugi saw theatre as a medium for learning. He disagreed with conventional imported notions that the theatre had to be ‘taken to the people’. The theatre had long been part of African culture, playing an important role in village rituals and even everyday life. Ngugi sought to create a form of theatre that gelled with the living of the people participating in it, involving the community. The performance space, more than anything else, was the open air auditorium. This entailed more than producing performances open to the public. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

All this was to change, however, when a woman from the village of Kamiriithu approached him demanding he do something for their education. As Ngugi himself lived near the village, he agreed, and with others, set up the Kamiriithu Community Education Centre. Ngugi saw theatre as a medium for learning. He disagreed with conventional imported notions that the theatre had to be ‘taken to the people’. The theatre had long been part of African culture, playing an important role in village rituals and even everyday life. Ngugi sought to create a form of theatre that gelled with the living of the people participating in it, involving the community. The performance space, more than anything else, was the open air auditorium. This entailed more than producing performances open to the public. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

All this was to change, however, when a woman from the village of Kamiriithu approached him demanding he do something for their education. As Ngugi himself lived near the village, he agreed, and with others, set up the Kamiriithu Community Education Centre. Ngugi saw theatre as a medium for learning. He disagreed with conventional imported notions that the theatre had to be ‘taken to the people’. The theatre had long been part of African culture, playing an important role in village rituals and even everyday life. Ngugi sought to create a form of theatre that gelled with the living of the people participating in it, involving the community. The performance space, more than anything else, was the open air auditorium. This entailed more than producing performances open to the public. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

The play was eventually staged after seven months of rehearsals and was a great success, with people coming from faraway villages and towns to watch it. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

All this was to change, however, when a woman from the village of Kamiriithu approached him demanding he do something for their education. As Ngugi himself lived near the village, he agreed, and with others, set up the Kamiriithu Community Education Centre. Ngugi saw theatre as a medium for learning. He disagreed with conventional imported notions that the theatre had to be ‘taken to the people’. The theatre had long been part of African culture, playing an important role in village rituals and even everyday life. Ngugi sought to create a form of theatre that gelled with the living of the people participating in it, involving the community. The performance space, more than anything else, was the open air auditorium. This entailed more than producing performances open to the public. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

The play was eventually staged after seven months of rehearsals and was a great success, with people coming from faraway villages and towns to watch it. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.

The play was eventually staged after seven months of rehearsals and was a great success, with people coming from faraway villages and towns to watch it. The Kenyan Government, disturbed by such new ideas, considered him a subversive element. He and his group were arrested and imprisoned several times, but still, they continued to perform, to offer his or her comments and criticisms. The theatre was English as the medium of expression continued with the emergence of Kenyan playwrights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o himself at first wrote several plays in English.
The world system has perfected a method of training and conditioning that enables it to recruit for its needs apparently the brightest and the best, and after selection, to use such recruits against the interests of the rest. Called 'quality education', the method invariably involves pitting thousands and millions of aspirants in a vastly unequal race among themselves to literally fight, by means fair and foul, for the really few places displayed as available for those who succeed. Success is understood as achieving close conformity and adherence in all respects with the requirements of modern life, or the rituals of bourgeois civil society. It also involves a sacrifice, a self-deprivation of one's inherent right to question, to revolt, to dissent, to create, to be free.

The creative energy of children and youth, from the age of five till the early twenties, is first frozen by schooling, and allowed gradually to atrophy till it appears to disappear completely from the (then) adult world. This exercise is conducted ruthlessly. I might add, in all societies in the industrialized world. It has the sanction of parents, the State, the ruling classes, whether political or intellectual. It eventually earns the sanction of the victim as well, when he decides that this is the most attractive option available to him if he desires to have recognition and approval of the self.

The method through which conformity in ideals is achieved is not even spectacular, on the contrary, it is fairly tedious if not revolting. For a minimum of fifteen years, when the mind functions the best and the spirit wishes the most, this system is compelled to read, process and memorise lifeless texts on the grounds that such texts represent science, truth, correct pictures of the real world. The victim is, as a rule, forced to discount and distrust his own experience. Every once in a while, the victim is subjected to certification processes and, in the form of examinations, during which he or she is assessed for their ability to recognize such texts correctly or repeat them from memory even if they do not understand their meaning.

Some of these texts are then taken overseas and regurgitated, cut, manipulated, rewritten allegedly for the benefit of people there. Thus, we know that Macaulay laid the basis for the creation of India's education system. Its purpose was overtly stated to be the recruitment of persons of Indian origin to assist the colonial State in the exercise of its power. Similar projects were instigated in other enslaved countries in Asia and Africa as well. This substitution or subversion of education with training violates the spirit of all that is good with this world. It violates religious codes, civilisational conduct, and can only be seen as a sign of active degradation of the human spirit. Therefore, we conclude, the so-called modern 'education' system must be shaken at its foundations, in very much the same manner as earthquakes are known to shake foundations.

The issue is how should this be done? Can it be achieved by asking questions? Like whose knowledge system is this? What is its purpose? If we did not create it, how can we be asked to claim it as our own? How do we reject our own knowledge, result of centuries of experience and valid, for such knowledge? What are its various assumptions? Have these been scrutinized by any of our intellectuals, secular or religious? What about our own knowledge? If it is valid here, why is it valid elsewhere? Is our knowledge valid only if re-investigated or patented within the perspective of the modern system?

These are important questions to ask. We need to demand answers. But whether the answers are forthcoming immediately or not, at the moment at least we are convinced that we cannot continue to function as human beings with borrowed knowledge. Borrowed knowledge can only enable us to lead borrowed or inferior lives. Gandhi said that anyone guilty of the sin of propagating European civilization should be sent to the (then) penal colony of the Andamans. What punishment can we mete out to educators and parents who commit the indefensible crime of destroying identities, patronizing homogeneity and suppressing creative freedom?

It is required of us, however, as self-respecting, intelligent human beings to carefully examine the politics of knowledge generation and dissemination in our academic institutions; to dissect the assumptions behind the sciences we call sociology, psychology, history, political science etc. We should give ourselves the freedom to choose freely, accept after consideration and reject where necessary, particularly all those intellectual disciplines where we may not find the assumptions acceptable to our view of the universe.

Let us draw up concrete plans, if possible, right down to the last detail, of how we can take down our present universities, instigate students to rise against the tyranny of dreams pushed by corporate machines and organize workshops to encourage faculty to rebel against the domination of Western academics and create their own creative academic discourses. The Multiworld Network must support these plans everywhere, like a banyan tree plans for the dismantling of borrowed knowledge, the rejection of unwarranted assumptions, the restoration of our absolute right, as human beings, to our own knowledge, the right to learn, not from texts, but from being and doing, and from simply being ourselves, as God made us.

— From the speech inaugurating the Multiworld Network in Penang

Who are in the Multiworld Network

Council of Elders

Nelson Mandela (Proposed)
The Dalai Lama (Proposed)
Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer
Haji Mohammad Idris, President,
Third World Network
Pujya Hitruchivijayji Maharaj,
Jain monk
Dharmapal, historian

Advisory Council

Haji Mohammad Idris (Chairperson)
Samdhong Rinpoche
Nagin wa Thiong'o
Gustavo Esteva, Mexico
Manish Jain, India
Ashis Nandy
Abhivyakti
Wasif Rizvi, Pakistan
Sanjoy Damyanti, India
Mashhood Rizvi, Pakistan
Theirin Selvam, India

Participating Individuals (first list)

Pawan K. Gupta, India
Sunil Sahasrabudhey, India
B S Chimni, India
Makarand Paranjape, India
Sailen Ghosh, India
S.N. Nagarajan, India
Rajiv Vora, India
Sangeeta Sriram, India
Jessica Hutchings, Aotearoa
S.N. Thulir@rediffmail.com
Isaac Ochien’g, Kenya
Coumba Toure, Mali
Gustavo Esteva, Mexico
Marianne Knuth, Zimbabwe
Khawar Fazal, Pakistan
Manish Jain, India
Zakir Kibria, Bangladesh
Gustavo Esteva, Mexico
Avijit Pathak, India
Zaid Hassan, India/UK
Manish Jain, India
Nitin Paranjpe, India
Avijit Pathak, India
Mohamed Iqbal Asaria, UK
Venu Govind, India
Vivek Bhandari, India
Anita Borkar, India
Nitin Singh, India
M Pushpavikram, India
K B Jinan, India
Yusef Progker, UAE
G Nammalwar, India
K B Jinan, India
Vivek Bhandari, India
Arjuna de Zoya, India
Avind Gupta, India
Venu Govind, India
Arvind Gupta, India
Nitin Paranjpe, India
Nitin Paranjpe, India
Vidya Patwardhan, India
Arvind Gupta, India
Nitin Paranjpe, India
M Sharan, India
Venu Govind, India
Sangeeta Sriram, India
Vedanath Murthy, India
Sangeeta Sriram, India

Participating Institutions

Other India Press
Goa, India
ob@goaonline.com
Abhivyakti
Nasik, India
nitin@abhivyakti.org.in
Shikshantar
Udaipur, India
shikshantar@yahoo.com
Citizens International
Penang, Malaysia
idrismd@tm.net.my
Poison Free Food Trust
Erode, Tamilnadu
thurl@rediffmail.com
Society for Integrated Development of the Malayas (SIDH)
Mussorie, India
Email: sidhrti@archanet.in
Partners for Urban Knowledge
Action and Research (PUKAR)
Mumbai, India
kshekhar@bol.net.in
Multiworld Network websites

**multiworld.org**

The Multiworld Network is not a centrally directed project, but will eventually comprise several continent- and country-based nodes that will be linked through the project. The main Multiworld website is: multiworld.org

We are therefore encouraging educational activists in every country within the South to have their own Multiworld chapter and site, operated by their own core group. Naturally, several of these will be in their own national, regional or local languages, with crosslinks to the main Multiworld page.

The main website will host discussions in the principal languages of the South: Hindi, Chinese, Swahili, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi etc.

We are also envisioning separate Multiworld sites on specific issues like the WTO, debt, international law, etc. Any person volunteering to set up and run such sites for us is welcome to do so. Please keep us informed so that work is not unnecessarily duplicated. If you come across interesting sites that should be linked with the Multiworld page, please inform us.

Multiworld.org, for the moment, also hosts the Multiversity webpage and the webpage dealing with the teaching and implications of (colonial) international law.

There are crosslinks that will take you to other multiworld sites, including those dealing with schooling (taleemnet) and organic agriculture (indiaorganic). We are also providing linkages to several other sites which are working in similar directions.

The multiworld.org site is being updated every week commencing January 1, 2003. We welcome contributions to the multiworld webpage from sympathetic colleagues and friends in Asia, Africa and South America.

**taleemnet.org**

This site is exclusively for reporting on discussions and experiments dealing with education outside school walls or outside the framework of factory schooling.

Educators, parents and even students are encouraged to visit the site to learn about what damage is done to children and learners through the coercive schooling process.

After reading the critique, parents may be interested in knowing what other parents are doing in different parts of the country and abroad.

The site features stories of children who have done better out of school than if they had continued with it.

Links are provided to significant home-schooling movements within the industrialised countries where there is an even greater mental anguish about the negative impact of schooling on personality development of children and youth.

**indiaorganic.org**

This site deals exclusively with the field of organic agricultural science. For the moment, the information available relates largely to the organic farming movement in India and Malaysia.

The site provides linkages to several organic farming sites within the country and abroad.

It reports on intellectual work carried out by farmers and innovations in the area of restoring soil fertility, improving the micro-community of soil species and organisms, homemade inputs, etc.

The main activities of organic farming are carried out under the rubric of Vazhiyval Multiversity which is located in Tamilnadu.

The first major activity of Vazhiyval relating to such teaching activities is already underway. Come early February 2003, three experienced and articulate organic farmers will leave for Malaysia to guide Malaysian farmers in the theory and practice of organic farming.

**multiversity msn page**

Yusef Progler from the UAE runs an independent Multiversity website which also features exciting new discussion materials, rare articles and reports on Multiversity themes.

Progler is editing a series of short essays by important scholars who have attempted to challenge in a fundamental way Western academic culture and its various associated components. You can access the site at: http://groups.msn.com/multiversity

Join the discussions there.

The site is frequently updated and the discussions will go on. Everything relating to the regime of Western academic studies is being challenged with determination, verve and imagination.

Multiworld Teachers

The Multiworld Network is arranging for organic farmers from India and Malaysia but eventually the Network will recruit a wide spectrum of experienced teachers who will visit and teach wherever they are assigned to by the Network.

The Network is inviting people who have great skills (whether in writing novels, or raising earthworms or educating through theatre) to volunteer their services to this initiative.

After Multiworld has evaluated their skills, it will assign them for short creative teaching assignments in any of the three continents. Please register your name with the Network in case you wish to participate in the programme.

---

Subscription Form for Kàmiññhû Newsletter

Yes, count me in on this enterprise. I want to deliver a mortal blow to globalisation’s designs on the minds, spirits and lives of children and young people everywhere.

Name:
Address:

Country:
Pin / Post Code:
Tel.:
Mobile:
Fax:
E-mail:

---

Subscription Rate

India: Rs.50 per year (six issues, including postage)
Please send in the form of postage stamps or as pay order, M.O. or DD in the name of Other India Bookstore, Mapusa, Goa.

Asia, Africa, South America, Aotearoa:
Air: US$ 3.00

Postal Address:
G-8 St Brittos Apartments,
Feira Alta, Mapusa 403 507
Goa, India.

Phone/Fax: (91-832) 2256479, 226305 (f)
E-mail:多iverse@goatelecom.com

WEBSITES

http://www.multiworld.org
http://taleemnet.org
http://www.indiaorganic.org
In Buddhist, Hindu and other worldviews, the tree is associated with knowledge and wisdom — for example — the revered Bodhi tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

In this design, five tree-forms connect together to suggest the confluence of the ideas and knowledge-systems of the indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, Oceania, North and South America. The spaces between the trees suggest entrances — the doorways of the mind and spirit that are opened through the process of a holistic education. The roof-form suggested by the intertwining lines continues the architectural metaphor, representing a house or institution of learning.

**The Question of 'White Studies'**

An American Indian, Ward Churchill, as far back as the early 1980s, provided a most significant denunciation of what passes off as knowledge even today in our schools, colleges and universities. Churchill placed all higher education in American universities under the label of 'White studies'.

He observed that American Universities had no qualm about setting up departments for African studies, American Indian studies, Mid-Eastern studies, etc, but nowhere could he find any catalogue description of White studies. Churchill reasoned that if American universities could create separate disciplines for the study of specific non-American societies, there was no reason why there should also not be a separate department for White Studies. The reason for not having any White studies in any curriculum, he concluded, could only be because all higher education was nothing but a form of White studies. These studies originated with and reflected the worldview of the European knowledge system and they simply assumed that this knowledge system, though born within a specific cultural framework, was universal.

The crux of the White Studies problem, then, cannot be located amidst the mere omission or distortion of matters of fact, no matter how blatantly ignorant or culturally chauvinistic these omissions and distortions may be. Far more importantly, the system of Eurosupremacist domination depends for its continued maintenance and expansion, even its survival, upon the reproduction of its own intellectual paradigm — its approved way of thinking, seeing, understanding, and being — to the ultimate exclusion of all others. Consequently, White Studies simply cannot admit to the existence of viable conceptual structures other than its own.

It was this very framework of White studies that came to be expanded across the globe through the colonial education systems set up to deal with people of colour, whether in Africa or Asia.

While the Europeans may claim reasons for assuming the superiority of their own knowledge system, we are yet to understand how people in our parts of the globe could have swallowed hook line and sinker, not only the content but the outer framework of White studies and credit it with universality.

We could of course excuse our own behaviour if we had continued to operate under the colonial rule of Europe. But this regime ended more than half a century ago! So how come we have continued to remain faithful to the teaching, interpretation, and implementation of White studies in our own countries? What explanation do we have for simply assuming that only White studies could be the basis for a universal education system, from school to university?

The Multiversity would like to ask these questions now, for it is necessary to find answers for what otherwise appears to be a fairly indefensible activity and one that has gone on brainlessly for far too long. Ask sociologists, psychologists, grammarians, historians or any other academics in any university in Africa, Asia or South America why they teach disciplines that are nothing but White studies, and they really have no answer. The easiest reply given is that they went to university, studied these subjects, were trained to discourse on the main concepts, and never at any time thought the assumptions of the knowledge system ought to be thoroughly examined, let alone rejected. They never thought their role as academics or intellectuals demanded anything more than simply implementing what they had been themselves taught to accept as universal science.

The entire structure of academia today whether in India or Malaysia or Kenya is nothing but a frank reflection of White studies. The curriculum in countries as disparate as the United Kingdom or the Philippines is very much the same. White studies has made possible the emergence of a species of human being who knows no traditions except the restrictive intellectual tradition of Europe. Whether we teach sociology, philosophy, ethics, history, anthropology, or whatever, we teach nothing of our own. We teach only borrowed material, cooked in other people's brains, often in languages we do not even speak or understand, and we call all this activity 'higher education'. It could be better described as 'lower education' instead.

According to another notable Native American thinker, John Mohawk, colonized peoples have three choices. They can remain 'good subjects' to the colonial system and not question any of its precepts or how it is distributed; they can become 'bad subjects' of the colonial system by accepting most of its precepts but questioning its distribution, or, to truly become liberated from Western colonialism, they can escape the system of White studies altogether and operate as 'non-subjects' by thinking and acting in ways beyond the reach of the narrow set of assumptions embedded in the White Studies model.

Churchill's work is a good start at helping teachers and students alike to move from their present status as good subjects toward a temporary station of being bad subjects by questioning or subverting the system from within. However, the overall goal is to become non-subjects of the still existing and powerful colonial order by abandoning or dismantling the system altogether and seeking habits of mind that are independent of the colonial order and its local proxies.
For the past couple of centuries, the European modern university has been replicated ad nauseum in every nook and corner of the globe with the noble intent of spreading a uniform perception of nature (based on modern science) and therefore a similar way of life and training across the world. The widespread assumption of the universality of modern science and – and by association naturally – the alleged superiority of other aspects and products of American and European culture, has provided the sanction for this diaspora.

The actual knowledge-generating centres naturally are located in the West, and they continue to supply the categories and terms for all intellectual debates. We play along. They remain the center, while we keep ourselves (or are kept) at the periphery. They create what we copy and apply. We do not challenge the underlying assumptions. We blanket copy because the disciplines are apparently well-tested and ‘scientific’, an officially-recognised body of knowledge. Replication is safer.

In such a situation, studies and research are considered best if done within the framework and ‘guidance’ of Western institutions. We have no felt need to go beyond the settled ‘white’ disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science, etc. Yet, these ‘sciences’ only retain value within the precincts of the academic world. Even within this world, there is hardly any true belief in their premises or assumptions.

Today, we may think that it absurd that one culture should become the norm for all others, to the extent that the majorities around the globe would wish to do more than just award ‘brand-name’ education to enable kids to stand out in the crowd (or the mob) for the few places available as high quality employment (which, the world over, remains as elusive or insecure as low quality employment).

The Multiversity must have, of necessity, a credible agenda for decolonising the mind, decolonising knowledge and asserting our complete intellectual independence. Such an agenda will help open up new possibilities for creative, collective action. Even after a trial of more than a hundred years, Western modes of perception have proved incapable of being drafted or accepted as a truly universal way of understanding Nature or interacting with it.

The Multiversity must have, of necessity, a credible agenda for decolonising the mind, decolonising knowledge and asserting our complete intellectual independence. Such an agenda will help open up new possibilities for creative, collective action. Even after a trial of more than a hundred years, Western modes of perception have proved incapable of being drafted or accepted as a truly universal way of understanding Nature or interacting with it.

For more details, check the Multiversity.org site, where sample entries are provided.

Dictionary Project

Vinay Lal, an Indian historian at the present moment located within the US, has commenced work with Multiversity associates on the preparation of a dictionary which will explain key words in circulation in formal discourse and with details of their political meanings.

Lal has welcomed widespread participation in the project and can be contacted at:

Vial@history.ucla.edu

For more details, check the Multiversity.org site, where sample entries are provided.

Multiversity Tracts

You can get access to Ward Churchill’s historic essay White Studies, either through the Multiworld webpage or in printed format, through Other India Bookstore.

In 2003, the Multiversity proposes to publish a series of similar, important essays which challenge in a fundamental way the manner in which present day conventional academic scholarship sees the world. All these essays and pamphlets will originate exclusively from intellectuals from the South. The aim of the new series is to have a set of readers that can be circulated through seminars and workshops in select universities in Asia, Africa and South America that wish to do more than just award paper degrees. Multiversity is also commissioning critiques of existing White studies disciplines like sociology, economics, psychology, history, anthropology, etc. Scholars from Asia, Africa or South America who are interested in writing such critiques are welcome to get in touch with us.
The Other India Bookstore Story

The common person on the street is not subjected to that kind of tyranny and he would be curious and ready to read a book about, say, Singapore if the subject looked interesting. An academic on the other hand would discount reading the Singaporean writer's work even before he looked at it because he would feel unable to quote from it if he were to write for some European journal.

Where did these books sell? Among the public at large. Common people are probably far more venturesome than professors in universities: the latter have to submit to the prevailing intellectual fashions of the time. A conversation or seminar, a scholar is not able to mention either the name of some German philosopher or a French Marxist, his peers look on him as uneducated.

The common person on the street is not subjected to that kind of tyranny and he would be curious and ready to read a book about, say, Singapore if the subject looked interesting. An academic on the other hand would discount reading the Singaporean writer's work even before he looked at it because he would feel unable to quote from it if he were to write for some European journal.

The Multi world Network's Newsletter
Could we learn something from the Maoris?

In India, for example, we prefer to remove any traces of Indian culture from education. Our language or tradition from the past and present day output of books – that is, the dominant paradigms. The teaching of international law in law schools across the Third World, in the law schools, through the education process. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

We recently did a survey through which we tried to look at the textbooks that are used in order to teach students in different parts of Asia: we found that practically all of them used only textbooks written by British or American law specialists and lawyers committed to the reform of the teaching of international law in the law schools. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

I think what we are faced with is having to unlearn a whole lot of propaganda and colonial rhetoric about who we are as Maori, and two, about the impact that the Crown has had upon us.

The teaching of international law in law schools in the Third World.

In India, for example, we prefer to remove any traces of Indian culture from education. Our language or tradition from the past and present day output of books – that is, the dominant paradigms. The teaching of international law in law schools across the Third World, in the law schools, through the education process. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

We recently did a survey through which we tried to look at the textbooks that are used in order to teach students in different parts of Asia: we found that practically all of them used only textbooks written by British or American law specialists and lawyers committed to the reform of the teaching of international law in the law schools. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

I think what we are faced with is having to unlearn a whole lot of propaganda and colonial rhetoric about who we are as Maori, and two, about the impact that the Crown has had upon us.

The teaching of international law in law schools in the Third World.

In India, for example, we prefer to remove any traces of Indian culture from education. Our language or tradition from the past and present day output of books – that is, the dominant paradigms. The teaching of international law in law schools across the Third World, in the law schools, through the education process. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

We recently did a survey through which we tried to look at the textbooks that are used in order to teach students in different parts of Asia: we found that practically all of them used only textbooks written by British or American law specialists and lawyers committed to the reform of the teaching of international law in the law schools. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

I think what we are faced with is having to unlearn a whole lot of propaganda and colonial rhetoric about who we are as Maori, and two, about the impact that the Crown has had upon us.

The teaching of international law in law schools in the Third World.

In India, for example, we prefer to remove any traces of Indian culture from education. Our language or tradition from the past and present day output of books – that is, the dominant paradigms. The teaching of international law in law schools across the Third World, in the law schools, through the education process. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

We recently did a survey through which we tried to look at the textbooks that are used in order to teach students in different parts of Asia: we found that practically all of them used only textbooks written by British or American law specialists and lawyers committed to the reform of the teaching of international law in the law schools. The situation here is no different from what the situation is in other disciplines.

I think what we are faced with is having to unlearn a whole lot of propaganda and colonial rhetoric about who we are as Maori, and two, about the impact that the Crown has had upon us.

The teaching of international law in law schools in the Third World.
Parents who claim to love their children are willing to submit them to a 12 year torture learning things that everyone forgets immediately after the examinations are over.

Children who remain out of school do not lose anything since all human beings learn better out of school, given their natural aptitudes to do this. Thus, children can learn three to four languages before they are six without a teacher, but cannot speak or write a language if it is taught to them in school, even after six or eight years!

Parents who claim to love their children are willing to submit them to a 12 year torture learning things that everyone forgets immediately after the examinations are over.

Children who remain out of school do not lose anything since all human beings learn better out of school, given their natural aptitudes to do this. Thus, children can learn three to four languages before they are six without a teacher, but cannot speak or write a language if it is taught to them in school, even after six or eight years!

Parents who claim to love their children are willing to submit them to a 12 year torture learning things that everyone forgets immediately after the examinations are over.

Children who remain out of school do not lose anything since all human beings learn better out of school, given their natural aptitudes to do this. Thus, children can learn three to four languages before they are six without a teacher, but cannot speak or write a language if it is taught to them in school, even after six or eight years!

Parents who claim to love their children are willing to submit them to a 12 year torture learning things that everyone forgets immediately after the examinations are over.

Children who remain out of school do not lose anything since all human beings learn better out of school, given their natural aptitudes to do this. Thus, children can learn three to four languages before they are six without a teacher, but cannot speak or write a language if it is taught to them in school, even after six or eight years!

Parents who claim to love their children are willing to submit them to a 12 year torture learning things that everyone forgets immediately after the examinations are over.

Children who remain out of school do not lose anything since all human beings learn better out of school, given their natural aptitudes to do this. Thus, children can learn three to four languages before they are six without a teacher, but cannot speak or write a language if it is taught to them in school, even after six or eight years!
Every year we find the exercise of compulsory schooling — and the mental torment it creates — dutifully and mindlessly repeated in every corner of the globe from the USA to Kenya to the Philippines. Whether rich country or poor, advanced or backward, it doesn’t matter. Indeed, the scale of the segmentation is far worse in countries like the USA, where almost every aspect of what is taught and how it is taught is under centralised institutional control. Paradoxically, the children of the middle and upper classes suffer the regimentation the most; while the children of the poor at least have the choice of dropping out and keeping their common sense.

The universal and unquestioned allegiance to the enterprise of schooling is simply astounding. If one peeks behind the curtains to find out what is really going on, Compulsory schooling is, in effect, the largest exercise in stultification being carried out in human history. Its sole intent appears to be to demoralise human beings, by convincing them of their need for almost lifelong tutoring. This tutoring is done by classes of people who themselves succumbed to being tutored under similar compulsions when they were children.

But the vast enterprise also has other undisclosed objectives. It blandly undermines the pupils’ grasp of reality, cuts off their links with the natural world, successfully incubates within the victim a wholesale contempt for the history of her own people, their traditions and ways of being. It takes diverse, bright and inquisitive children and turns them into hesitant, timid and dull individuals by the time they reach puberty, continuously in need of additional training and at best available to service the global, consumer-oriented, profit-inspired mega-machine.

Schooling does not educate, it actually cripples. This assessment is based on the following facts relating to its impact on children:

First, schooling destroys human creativity in fundamental ways, by constantly reinforcing the unwarranted idea that those who do not attend it are inferior. It promotes the notion that all people are born either empty or with rudimentary ideas and must therefore go through the grind of being ‘finished’ or ‘polished’ or ‘certified’.

Above all, it promotes the conviction that only the official knowledge imparted in the school is knowledge: anything beyond that may well be interesting, but it is not valid. Reality, if fact, is to be discarded if it conflicts with what is provided for in the textbook.

In fact, schools today have no need for creativity. They do not either recognise or encourage it. In places where it is recognised, it still remains tightly controlled so that it does not interfere with the larger agenda of indoctrination and commodification. Those in charge of education systems have decided that children only need to memorize predigested answers (prepared by faceless textbook writers, working in centralised educational institutions) in order to be deemed ‘educated’ and fit for society.

In examinations, the answer which most closely resembles the predigested ‘correct response’ will receive the highest marks. On the other hand, a creative answer which differs from the standard/accepted response is almost certain to be marked wrong. This humiliating brain-devouring exercise called exams is conducted fairly ruthlessly. What is more, it has the sanction of parents, ruling institutions, the corporate class, the State and most intellectuals and parents.

As a result, it ensues the sanction of the victim too.

Compulsory schooling — now given legal sanction by draconian education Acts (such as the 93rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution) — that promise to punish parents that do not send their wards to school — is seen as the only option available to welfare States to force people to take up opportunities which will eventually enable them to come up in life and to be seen as equals of more privileged folk. Any move to criticise schooling is then perceived as an elitist maneuver to block the mobility of the poor.

However, experience of the schooling system in all countries has shown that it has more often than not helped maintain and reinforce inequality, rather than eliminate it. Aside from the obvious fact that rich people attend elite or public schools, and poorer folk go to poor schools from which they eventually opt out, ‘quality education’ available to the rich actually creates an additional layer of inequality in addition to those created by other social devices.

The second major problem, which we perceive in the former colonised territories exclusively faced, is that the content of education contains largely negative perceptions of our local and national histories, cultures, languages and religions. This is a direct consequence of the success of attitudes represented so well by people like T. B. Macaulay. In this context, European ideas are considered the only basis for a proper schooling programme and for ‘civilized’ living. History textbooks in India, for example, still unabashedly hail the arrival of Vasco-da-Gama as a great event. Or repeat themes proposed by English historians like James Mill or even Karl Marx: incorporating the intellectual corpus of Indian or other civilisations into the materials prepared for courses still provokes resistance from some quarters. Earlier, it had provoked penalties and punishments.

Why schools should wither away for good...

Ivan Illich Departs

The celebrated author of De-Schooling Society retired from Planet Earth on December 2, 2002, at Bremen in Germany.

Ivan Illich inaugurated the critique of emerging global tyrannies by his sharp analysis of the character of industrial societies. He used schooling as an example to show how industrial societies actually militated against human welfare. He was therefore immediately pounced upon as a critic of schooling. He generated a huge opus, compounding several decades of work.

Illich followed what he preached. He succumbed to a cancer after suffering it for nearly 20 years. He would not get it medically treated because that would have succumbed to the very tenants he had delineated. He had written Medical Nemesis and in his preface to the Tao of Cancer (written by Manu Kothari and Lopa Mehta).

His departure is a loss to all men and women of goodwill and to those who continue to struggle against the human cancer called industrial civilisation.

Schooling Nature

Hey! All you butterflies! You ought to carry schoolbags on your backs!
And you should not fly freely here and there, this way and that.

Hey! You beautiful rivers and streams! Do not meander, but flow straight!
And do not make a noise either: flow quietly! Likewise all you fishes!

Do not swim any which way you please.

Swim in straight lines, as they do in swimming championships!

Hey! All you colourful flowers! Wear the same colour, uniform and dress, as they do in school!

Poem by J. Kapan Pathak

---

Medical Nemesis

By Ivan Illich

‘Writing my article – “Medical Nemesis” – was a kind of revenge…’

Ivan Illich inaugurated the critique of emerging global tyrannies by his sharp analysis of the character of industrial societies. He used schooling as an example to show how industrial societies actually militated against human welfare. He was therefore immediately pounced upon as a critic of schooling. He generated a huge opus, compounding several decades of work.

Illich followed what he preached. He succumbed to a cancer after suffering it for nearly 20 years. He would not get it medically treated because that would have succumbed to the very tenants he had delineated. He had written Medical Nemesis and in his preface to the Tao of Cancer (written by Manu Kothari and Lopa Mehta).

His departure is a loss to all men and women of goodwill and to those who continue to struggle against the human cancer called industrial civilisation.
Thoughts from the Multiversity Meeting in Penang:

This is an ideal time in history to be talking about education and this is an important time to interject new voices. The educational system that we are all talking about is basically a western educational system that came to us through colonisation in different times and places. The uniformity of this system is astounding, from India to the Arab world, to the United States, it is uniform but at the same time there is an uncertainty about the future of that uniform system.

Sometimes, this system is called ‘factory schooling’. Factory schooling was designed to produce factory workers. It thrives on fear, boredom and obedience, but now people are saying that factory schools are outdated, that we need something for a post-industrial society. So now, schools, under the rubric of being reformed, are adopting the ideology of consumerism so they are replacing fear and boredom with fun and games and they are replacing obedience with forms of disobedience with the commodification of transgression as an educational act. Within this movement, there is a wedge being driven between the factory schooling system that we all know and love or hate and this new consumer oriented educational system, and no one is quite sure what the result will be.

My question is, why do we continue to follow these fads and trends, and when they come at us through distant experts, or through those who go to the West for training, when those in the West are unsure of themselves right now, how could we say the same thing about economics, we could say the same thing about science? There is an interesting period of time in the world right now where the West, which is really what gave us these things that we are trying to undo, is unsure of itself. And it’s trying to rebrancl or redefine itself and get everybody else to join in, even though they don’t know where they’re going. It’s an ideal time to take a detour, to slow down, to stop, to ask questions, to come up with something different.

In response to this consumerist kind of education we can schools that are now emphasizing games, fun, toys, balloons, candy bars, cartoon characters, all in an effort to do something about the excruciating boredom that the factory system foisted off on children for a century. But now people are feeling that kids aren’t learning anything with fun and games so now there’s an attempt to say, ‘Wait a minute, let’s get back to the factory system, bring it back’. But this is it being called the new standard of movement. It’s coming out of the United States.

The present system of education encourages fear. There is the fear of possibility, or fear of the unknown, or fear of uncertainty which emerges because of the whole system of conditioning. You are told constantly: ‘There can’t be any other way’. This is the best system that there is. There is no alternative. ‘So there is a complete shutdown of possibilities, a complete shutdown of uncertainties. And this is what Multiversity must successfully undo.

— Shilpa Jain

The Alternative Education Source Book

You are welcome to join the small but steadily growing network of parents and educators who feel children are best outside school. In fact, if you really love your children, you may want to examine why you are sending them to an institution like the school which intends to slowly kill them.

Much of the most rigorous critique of ‘factory schooling’ is being carried out through the Shikshantar Foundation based in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India. Get to their website: www.swaraj.org/shikshantar.

Shikshantar has much larger objectives than just the un-schooling of society all across the globe. The Foundation brings out a printed journal called Vnimukt Shikshantar which highlights many critical aspects of schooling and open learning processes.

Other institutions associated with Taleemnet include Other India Press, Abhiyakti and the Consumers’ Association of Penang which have already brought out books and pamphlets on why it is healthy to stay out of schools (Danger School; How School Affects Your Kids). Taleemnet is bringing out by March 2003, the first manual or source book for parents and teenagers on how to get out of school and remain out.

The source book answers questions like: Do parents have to substitute for teachers? Do unschooling students have to study the same syllabus at home as if they went to school? How does one get a job if one is out of school? etc etc.

The manual also identifies a number of learning centres already being run in different areas outside the framework of ‘factory schooling’ and reports on their insights.

The source book will not only include detailed stories of all experiments in open learning centres, which have emerged as an alternative to the formal schooling system. It will also provide details of other resources, including: lists of educators, discussions on alternatives to school and college, successful learning programmes that eschew certification and fees, etc.

Taleemnet will function as a global clearinghouse for the exchange of information that will assist the further decline of schools and other institutions of thought-control. It will carry on the publishing of books, journals and video films that will attack the legitimacy of schooling in effective ways (a task which is not difficult by any length of the imagination). Taleemnet will also ensure that the educational practices are circulated in a well-organised and systematic way for enhanced use across the planet, particularly among educators and parents.

Taleemnet will also prepare special programmes for parents, as in large parts of the world, they remain the principal agents responsible for demanding ever more educational burdens for their wards. Parents of children will have to become members of Taleemnet en masse, especially when they are convinced that it will enable them to protect their children’s own unique identities and stimulate creative learning.

Taleemnet objectives

- Disseminate literature relating to the ill effects of schools and schooling.
- Visit, document and disseminate innovative learning experiences being conducted outside the framework of factory schooling.
- Document homeschool experiences from across the world.
- Initiate legal battles against compulsory schooling and state-directed education.
- Create infrastructure and opportunities for those who opt out of school.
- Conduct interviews with those individuals who have succeeded despite dropping out of school.
- Create political support for the use and development of the mother tongue.
- Create alternative certification schemes for those who say or feel they need them for any purpose including employment.
- Study the enormous amount of wastage of resources reflected in the years taken to train people who eventually drop out and do not use what they are taught.
- Help in the reform of existing schools, to mitigate at first their worst aspects, particularly those features that make schools like prisons.
- Examine the possibility of creating shorter duration courses so that children have to spend fewer years or hours compulsorily or otherwise in school.
- Study the impact of open schools vis-a-vis normal schools.
- Publish a major source book on alternatives to factory schooling which can be circulated in all the three continents of Asia, Africa and South America.
- Link up all major initiatives in this area through Taleemnet and Multworld.
Once upon a time there was a bird. It was ignorant. It sang all right, but never recited scriptures. It hopped pretty frequently, but lacked manners.

Said the Raja to himself: ‘Ignorance is costly in the long run. For fools consume as much food as their betters, and yet give nothing in return.’

He called his nephews to his presence and told them that the bird must have a sound schooling.

The pundits were summoned, and at once went to

The Parrot

This one story — written by Indian Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1924 — says it all.

The bird thus crawled on, duly and properly, to the safest verge of insanity. In fact, its progress was satisfactory in the extreme. Nevertheless, nature occasionally triumphed over training, and when the morning light peeped into the birds’ cage it sometimes fluttered its wings in a reprehensible manner. And, though it is hard to believe, it pitifully peeked at its bars with its feeble beak.

What impertinence! growled the kotwal. The Raja was about to remount his elephant, when the fault-finder, from behind some bush, cried out: ‘Maharaja, have you seen the bird?’

Indeed, I have not!’ exclaimed the Raja. ‘I completely forgot about the bird.’

Turning back, he asked the pundits about the method they followed in instructing the bird. It was shown to him. He was immensely impressed. The method was so stupendous that the bird looked ridiculously unimportant in comparison. The Raja was satisfied that there was no flaw in the arrangements. As for any complaint from the bird itself, that simply could not be accepted. Its throat was so completely choked with the leaves from the books that it could neither whistle nor whis- per. It sent a thrill through one’s body to watch the process.

This time, while remounting his elephant, the Raja ordered his State Earpuller to give a thorough good pull at both the ears of the fault-finder.

The Raja called his nephews and asked them: ‘My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?’

The nephews said: ‘Sire, the bird’s education has been completed.’

‘Does it hop?’ the Raja enquired.

‘No!’ said the nephews.

‘Does it fly?’

‘No.’

‘Bring me the bird,’ said the Raja.

The bird was brought to him, guarded by the kotwal and the sepoys and the sowers. The Raja poked its body with his finger. Only its inner stuffing of book-leaves rustled.

Outside the window, the murmur of the spring breeze amongst the newly budded leaves made the April morning wistful.

Kamiriithu will appear six times a year. The next issue will appear on March 1, 2003. Guest editors are welcome.

The three logos for the three sub-themes have been prepared by Orijit Sen. Illustrations, drawings and cartoons are by Nicky Thomas.

The newsletter has been printed by Multiworld at Maureen’s, Rua de Ourem, Panaji, Goa, India. It is designed for private circulation and is also posted on the Net at multiworld.org. It is published from Multiworld Network, G-8 St Britto’s Apartments, Feira Alta, Mapusa 403 507 Goa, India.

email: marysity@goatelecom.com